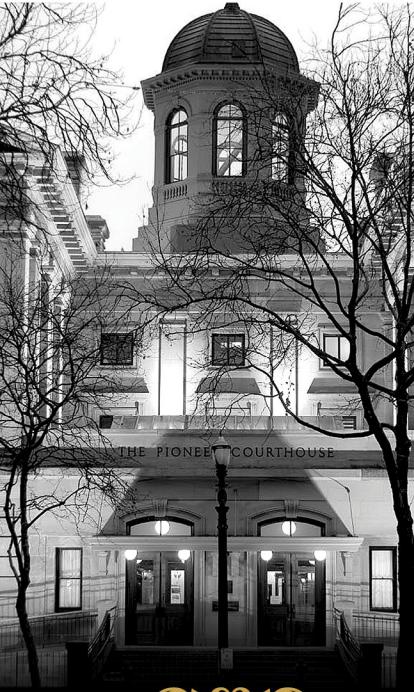


Michael David Sills, et al. v. Southern Baptist Convention
3:23-cv-00478

Exhibit 3



IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
NASHVILLE DIVISION

MICHAEL DAVID SILLS AND MARY SILLS,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

CASE NO. 3:23-cv-00478

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION,

A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION; ET AL.,

Defendants.



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VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF

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THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025

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9:05 A.M.

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1	EXHIBIT INDEX	Page 10	Page 12
2	EXHIBIT	PAGE	
3			
4	81 LYELL_00347008	N/A	1 penalty of perjury, that the testimony you're about
5	82 LYELL_00345026	N/A	2 to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
6	83 LYELL_00103681	216	3 nothing but the truth?
7	84 LYELL_00097146 2010	221	4 THE DEONENT: Yes.
8	85 LYELL_00122313	224	5 THE REPORTER: Thank you, ma'am.
9	86 LYELL_00078843	N/A	6 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: You may now proceed.
10	87 LYELL_00113173	N/A	7 MS. McNULTY: Could -- could I turn that
11	88 LYELL_00102504	234	8 down -- that just a little bit. Thank -- thank you.
12	89 LYELL_00344960	N/A	9 Sorry. Thanks a lot. I know -- yeah, I appreciate
13	90 LIFE162981	N/A	10 it.
14	91 EC_0003663	282	11 THE REPORTER: Could we please have
15	92 GPSILLS_017902	287	12 everybody introduce themselves.
16	93 GPSILLS_017912	289	13 MS. RILEY: Yes.
17	94 SILLS_096525	N/A	14 MR. ELBERT: Yes.
18			15 MS. RILEY: Katherine Riley with the
19			16 Barrett Law Group for the plaintiffs.
20			17 MS. KLEIN: Kathy Klein with Riley and
21			18 Jacobson. I represent Defendant Guidepost
22			19 Solutions.
23			20 MS. CALLAS: Gretchen Callas with the law
24			21 firm of Jackson Kelly for the executive committee
25			22 and Rolland Slade.
			23 MR. LOOFBOURROW: Ryan Loofbourrow for the
			24 executive committee and Rolland Slade.
			25 MR. PIETSCH: Matt Pietsch for the
1	VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF	Page 11	Page 13
2	JENNIFER LYELL		1 Southern Baptist Convention, Ed Litton, and Bart
3	DAY 2		2 Barber.
4	TAKEN ON		3 MS. POOLE: Nicole Poole for Defendant
5	THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025		4 Willy McLaurin.
6	9:05 A.M.		5 MR. LEET: Byron Leet for the Southern
7			6 Baptist Seminary and Dr. Mohler.
8	THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're on the record.		7 MR. HARRIS: Ron Harris of Neal and
9	The time is 9:05 a.m. Date is April 10th, 2025.		8 Harwell for the defendant, Jennifer Lyell.
10	This is the beginning of the deposition of Jennifer		9 MS. STOCKTON: Mariam Stockton for
11	Lyell. The case caption is Sills versus Southern		10 Jennifer Lyell.
12	Baptist Convention.		11 MR. FOWLER: I'm Satchel Fowler for
13	Will counsel introduce yourselves and		12 Jennifer Lyell.
14	state whom you represent.		13 MR. ELBERT: And can we get a verbal
15	MS. McNULTY: Shannon McNulty for the		14 greeting on the people on screen.
16	plaintiff.		15 MR. OTCHY: Alex Otchy, Mintz and Gold,
17	MR. ELBERT: Phil Elbert for Defendant		16 for Defendant Guideposts.
18	Jennifer Lyell. And I would note that this is a		17 MR. ANDERSON: Jon Anderson for the EC and
19	continuation of yesterday's deposition. It's --		18 Rolland Slade.
20	it's not the --		19 MR. RIDDLE: Kris Riddle on behalf of
21	THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Thank you. Court		20 plaintiff.
22	reporter will now swear in the witness.		21 MS. ALDRIDGE: Sterling Aldridge, Barrett
23	THE REPORTER: Ms. Lyell, please raise		22 Law Group, on behalf of the plaintiff.
24	your right hand.		23 MR. BREWER: Gary Brewer on behalf of the
25	Thank you, ma'am. Do you affirm, under		24 plaintiff.
			25 MR. WHITE: Ben White for the plaintiff.

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1 me give an objection. I'm going to object to 2 leading questions. 3 THE DEPONENT: I -- I would -- to the -- 4 in all -- I resisted -- attempted to resist 5 verbally, physically squirming, reasoning, no, all 6 these things. Obviously, in those circumstances, I 7 couldn't speak. 8 And I would try to push back with my head, 9 but it generally would be futile. 10 I would say another way that he used force 11 was the space that he would do things in. So, you 12 know, in his home and relative to certain walls or 13 corners or things. So it wasn't just his body, but 14 a piece of furniture or a wall or something to where 15 it's, like, I would have even fewer ways to maneuver 16 away. And he always knew that I did not want that 17 to happen. 18 BY MR. ELBERT: 19 Q. Did he verbalize his understanding of 20 whether or not you wanted that to happen after the 21 acts? 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. Please describe that. Just example. 24 A. An example would be, like, in a reassuring 25 tone, there was -- for the kind of several -- for	1 see. 2 A. I was -- 3 Q. Did he -- did he -- did -- did Dr. Sills 4 express to you that there were things he thought 5 were wrong with you or broken in you -- that if you 6 worked on them, it would solve this problem? 7 MS. RILEY: Objection, leading. 8 THE DEPONENT: I believe that states what 9 I've stated before that he said, so yes. I would 10 also like to amend my answer to your previous 11 question that, another thing after -- when you asked 12 about statements that he would make after. 13 When it became the nature of things, I 14 started to realize that he actually wanted it, and 15 it wasn't this broken thing in me. And I tried to 16 navigate it in different ways. And then that is 17 where a lot of the aggression escalated in the forms 18 of force. And some aspects changed later in the 19 years. 20 And he would then -- very often, when he 21 would finish, like in that example of the oral sex, 22 the hand would come off of my head, and he would 23 say, now, go fix your face and repent. Because I 24 would often be crying and there'd be makeup and 25 things.
Page 295	Page 297
1 several years of knowing him, being part of the 2 family, and -- and those events at times happening, 3 it would be that reasoning around -- that I've 4 shared is an answer to previous questions in this 5 deposition of, I know you didn't want this. God 6 knows you didn't want this. I don't want this, too. 7 This is redemptive. It -- it -- 8 Q. What do you mean "redemptive"?	1 And so -- and then he had rules, such as 2 that after you repent, because of First John 1:9, 3 that you can never speak of whatever you've repented 4 of, or that's blasphemous. And so I was stuck 5 without a way to figure out how to navigate the -- 6 all of the confusing and seemingly conflicting 7 dynamics. But he always knew that I never, ever 8 wanted any instance. 9 And I always, always tried to stop it.
9 A. The way that I understood it was that I 10 was -- I, you know, struggled and felt guilty for, 11 you know, being 26, 27, 28, however old, and still 12 really longing to have godly parents and be part of 13 a godly family. 14 And not just wanting the glory of God. 15 And so I thought that that desire for 16 parents, when God had -- for godly parents, when God 17 had not chosen me to give -- had not chosen to give 18 me those, was sinful. And that somehow, that was 19 making him do that. 20 In the same kind of way that, you know, 21 you might hear in a sermon that a girl wearing a 22 short skirt or a tight shirt was making someone -- a 23 -- a man lust, and then sin. And -- yes. I'm 24 sorry. I forgot the rest of your question. 25 Q. Well, so did you -- well, I think -- let's	10 BY MR. ELBERT: 11 Q. And -- and did you also -- you mentioned 12 ways to try to navigate it. Did -- well, did you -- 13 you mentioned Mary being home or the kids being 14 home. 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Explain the types of things -- just a few 17 examples of what you would do to try to navigate the 18 situation, so as not to be alone with Dr. Sills. 19 MS. RILEY: Object, leading. 20 THE DEPONENT: So I stated that I -- I 21 would, you know, it was kind of, like, this cat-and- 22 mouse thing. I tried to navigate it. So, like, one 23 example is, if I -- you know, time frame was going 24 to be coming to town, something going on, or spend 25 time with the family.

Page 298		Page 300
1	But I would pick a weekend when he was	1 shocking. But at the same time, there was also --
2	going to be preaching on that Sunday, because first	2 he was, as reflected in, you know, a lot of the e-
3	of all, his schedule would be different because he	3 mails, we've looked and things, he could also be, at
4	would be working on the sermon part of the time of	4 times, you know, just -- and was, in general, you
5	the weekend. So therefore, he wouldn't be able to	5 know, paternal and encouraging and a mentor.
6	come up with some sort of household project that he	6 And it is -- it was -- to say deeply
7	then asked me to help him with, that then would	7 confusing is a dramatic understatement, because you
8	leave us alone in some, you know, sector of the	8 would think for one thing to be true, that the
9	house.	9 others couldn't. But I -- it -- it is the reality
10	Plus my hope and what, at times, would	10 that they all were.
11	very well be the case is, you know, he's spending	11 Q. Were -- were what?
12	more time in scripture, and so he's just not	12 A. Were true -- were the case. They all
13	operating out of whatever that motivation was and	13 existed together.
14	maybe is more reticent to do that when he knows he's	14 MR. ELBERT: That's all I have. Thank
15	going to need to stand and preach 12 or 24 hours	15 you.
16	later. I -- obviously, times whenever, you know, it	16 THE DEPONENT: Thank you.
17	was more members of the family there.	17 THE REPORTER: Counsel, may I please get
18	MR. ELBERT: Was -- was -- yeah.	18 your name.
19	BY MR. ELBERT:	19 THE DEPONENT: Phil?
20	Q. You -- you read Dr. Sill's deposition?	20 MR. ELBERT: Phil Elbert.
21	A. Yes.	21 THE REPORTER: Thank you.
22	Q. And -- and I may have this wrong, but my	22 MS. RILEY: Anybody else? It's okay for
23	recollection is, he said that these encounters would	23 me to redirect?
24	occur only maybe ten times a year. So were -- were	24 T, will you pull up Sills 096526.
25	there occasions where there was -- were these	25 MS. MADDUX: Wait. Say that number again.
Page 299		Page 301
1	assaults on you or abuse of you, but were there	1 I'm sorry.
2	other occasions where the family situation would	2 MS. RILEY: Sills 096526.
3	appear normal and appropriate to you and -- and	3 MS. MADDUX: Okay.
4	inviting?	4 MS. RILEY: Can you blow it up?
5	A. Yes. And there were -- it's not as though	5 MR. ELBERT: Literally, or just bigger?
6	the instances and the abusive actions or assaults	6 MS. RILEY: What?
7	were, you know, evenly spaced or predictable. There	7 MR. ELBERT: Are you literally going to
8	could be long -- there could be, you know, more	8 blow it up, or just make it bigger?
9	months between them. There could be, you know, a --	9 MS. RILEY: Just blow it up so Ms. Lyell
10	a weekend where it was just absolute nightmare, and	10 can identify it for me.
11	I couldn't control anything.	11 MR. ELBERT: I was -- I was just kidding
12	And also, I would say -- I would note that	12 you.
13	-- that every time something happened, you know,	13 EXAMINATION
14	although it felt like the minutes were forever, I	14 BY MS. RILEY:
15	know that they were very, very brief in actual	15 Q. What's that, Ms. Lyell?
16	minutes -- time.	16 A. Can they -- well, first, let me see
17	And he could go from -- and then would	17 because there's multiple -- I'm sorry. Can you
18	lead me -- thus, lead me from, you know, what I just	18 scroll --
19	explained of the forced oral sex and me cleaning my	19 MS. RILEY: T, she needs to identify it.
20	face, repenting, him washing his hands, and truly,	20 THE DEPONENT: I need to see the -- I'm
21	within five minutes, being like, hey, Mary's	21 looking at the participants.
22	calling, let's get up, dinner's ready. Sit down at	22 Okay. I don't know what that was. You
23	the table, and we're joining hands, and he's leading	23 can scroll down now so I can see the full image,
24	in prayer.	24 please.
25	And that was obviously jarring and	25 This is a photo that I sent, it looks

<p>1 like, from the airport in Ecuador of an homita and a 2 juice drink on the family text thread.</p> <p>3 MS. RILEY: Let's see. I can't see that 4 far. Let me see if I can pull it up.</p> <p>5 THE DEPONENT: Oh, okay. Now I see the 6 replies. And then there are replies. I don't know 7 who "me" is on this. But again, this was sent to 8 David Sills, Mary Sills, Molly Sills, and 9 Christopher Sills and Carol Sills. Daniel wasn't, I 10 don't think, on that thread. I don't know the date 11 in --</p> <p>12 MS. RILEY: Okay.</p> <p>13 THE DEPONENT: -- in 2016, yeah.</p> <p>14 MS. RILEY: All right.</p> <p>15 THE DEPONENT: And then the messages 16 reflect that I'm talking about -- I must be leaving 17 a visit with Christopher and Carol, because I state 18 that I probably gained ten pounds this week. Your 19 daughter-in-law, referencing Carol, who looks like 20 would be on King Cook.</p> <p>21 MS. RILEY: Okay.</p> <p>22 THE DEPONENT: I see the numbers at the 23 top. It -- we had a family text thread that was 24 everybody. I don't know if this one -- and I had 25 Christopher, Carol on it. I don't remember their</p>	<p>Page 302</p> <p>1 A. I actually don't recall. I think I got it 2 from multiple people. It was very broadly 3 circulated.</p> <p>4 Q. Okay. So it wasn't a confidential e-mail 5 that you received that you shouldn't have?</p> <p>6 A. I mean, I don't recall it being labeled as 7 such. And generally, those things always leak. But 8 it wasn't sent specifically or only to me.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay.</p> <p>10 A. It was sent to -- and discussed openly 11 online.</p> <p>12 Q. You've testified -- I'm sorry. You have 13 stated before that when you went to this -- well, 14 let me ask you: Was this the convention that you 15 went to that you said you had to have nine armed 16 guards?</p> <p>17 A. No.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. Which is the convention that you 19 went to that you -- that you had to have nine armed 20 guards?</p> <p>21 A. To the Southern Baptist Convention in 2019 22 in Birmingham.</p> <p>23 Q. Okay. The --</p> <p>24 A. The EC meeting is a very small meeting --</p> <p>25 Q. Okay. So --</p>
<p>Page 303</p> <p>1 numbers, but --</p> <p>2 BY MS. RILEY:</p> <p>3 Q. Did anybody -- so who -- do you know who 4 -- do you know who else responded? Which -- which 5 is your telephone number?</p> <p>6 A. My phone number is (615) 495-5765.</p> <p>7 Q. Okay.</p> <p>8 A. Mary is (502) 558-6261, so she replied. I 9 believe the green is -- yeah.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay.</p> <p>11 A. Snort, snort. That's David.</p> <p>12 MS. RILEY: Okay. You can pull that down, 13 T.</p> <p>14 At the beginning of Ms. Klein's 15 questioning, she -- you talked about -- that an e- 16 mail was sent to you from Baptist Press or from the 17 executive committee right before the -- the 18 conference.</p> <p>19 BY MS. RILEY:</p> <p>20 Q. Do you remember talking about that?</p> <p>21 A. Yes. The -- it was actually an e-mail 22 from -- that was sent -- sent to a lot of people 23 that was a forward of an e-mail that Ronnie Floyd 24 had sent to EC trustees.</p> <p>25 Q. And -- and who sent it to you?</p>	<p>Page 305</p> <p>1 A. -- relative.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. So the one that you're talking 3 about with the -- the meeting was just the -- the 4 board of directors of the executive committee; is 5 that correct?</p> <p>6 A. It's the trustees, which there are about 7 70.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. But it -- so it wasn't the whole 9 convention?</p> <p>10 A. Correct.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay.</p> <p>12 A. Correct.</p> <p>13 Q. All right. So it -- the Birmingham 14 convention is when you had to have the nine armed 15 guards?</p> <p>16 A. I don't believe that they were armed.</p> <p>17 Q. But that's what you said, isn't it?</p> <p>18 A. I don't think I said armed. Maybe I did 19 closer to the event, and maybe they were. I just 20 know that they were all around us.</p> <p>21 Q. Who -- who were these people?</p> <p>22 A. I know two of them, but I didn't know the 23 others. And it wasn't just me. It was me, Megan 24 Lively, and Rachael Denhollander.</p> <p>25 Q. Somebody pay for y'all to have armed</p>